

# Getting real about Virtual Backup and Recovery

Virtualisation continues to grow in popularity with real implications when it comes to backup and disaster recovery



Since its first appearance on industry-standard servers in 2001, virtualisation has taken the market by storm, becoming the accepted norm in datacentres right across the globe. Whether it's vSphere from VMware®, Microsoft®'s Hyper-V, Citrix XenServer or whatever, the majority of companies now install a hypervisor on their servers as a matter of course, enabling them to maximise use of costly datacentre hardware while, at the same time, delivering increased levels of flexibility and availability through virtual machine deployment.

Along with such benefits, however, come additional responsibilities when it comes to backup and recovery of virtual environments and the data associated with them. Taking backups of physical host servers simply isn't good enough anymore. Companies need tools that are "virtualisation-aware" and thus able to protect and recover individual VMs without affecting others on the same host.

Whether this kind of backup and recovery protection is implemented using tools designed solely for a particular virtualisation platform or as part of a wider solution able

to protect physical and virtual machines is open to debate. Either way, it's a pressing need given the ever growing enthusiasm for virtualisation in the datacentre and one which backup specialist Acronis is committed to helping customers meet.

As part of that commitment Acronis compiles an annual survey of worldwide confidence in backup and disaster recovery provision: [www.acronis.com.au/DRI-2012/](http://www.acronis.com.au/DRI-2012/). Run in conjunction with the Ponemon Institute, an international research firm and respected think tank on data protection trends, the Acronis Global Disaster Recovery (DR) Index provides a country by country ranking of confidence levels in backup and DR provision around the world.

This year the survey has also thrown up a number of key global findings some of which are discussed further in this whitepaper, where we look at the continued spread of virtualisation, the implications in terms of backup and recovery and how Acronis is helping customers address those issues.

## Key Global Finding:

### SMB adoption of virtualisation will outpace that of the enterprise in 2012

According to the SMB-focused respondents of the Acronis survey, virtualisation will increase by 21% over the coming year. That compares to the results of a recent Gartner report showing that virtualisation adoption will increase in the enterprise by just 14% (Gartner's Virtualisation Research - Virtual machines will slow in the Enterprise, Grow in the Cloud, Thomas J Bittman, Lydia Leong, 4 March 2011, RA1010182011).

### Implications for backup and disaster recovery

Overall growth in virtualisation appears to be tailing off, but as the technology becomes more accessible and easier to deploy it is starting to make the move from the enterprise to the SME. The resultant implications in terms of backup and recovery are significant as this sector simply doesn't have the budget available to large corporate customers to spend on protecting their virtual assets. Neither does it have the depth of expertise found in corporate IT departments.

Add those two together and, if a backup and recovery solution isn't both affordable and easy to manage, there's a high probability that small business buyers will either make do with something of lesser value or, worse still, ignore the problem of virtual machine protection altogether.

Companies at the smaller end of the spectrum may also standardise on a single virtualisation platform, which means they don't necessarily need the complexity of backup and recovery solutions designed to encompass multiple environments. However, they still need to protect physical as well as virtual assets and backup and recovery tools designed for hybrid environments may be the best way of going about that task.

### How Acronis can help

Acronis® vmProtect™ 7 for businesses that have standardised on vSphere (majority) – fixed cost, easy to use, fast and effective.

Acronis Backup & Recovery® 11 Virtual Edition – for consolidated physical and virtual protection, plus support for multiple virtualisation platforms.

## Key Global Finding:

### Virtual data at greater risk than physical

Companies continue to fall short when it comes to protecting their virtual machines and the data accumulating on them, particularly when it comes to the frequency with which backups are taken.

Key findings from the Acronis survey were:

- A third of companies admitted to backing up virtual servers less often than physical ones, the worst culprits being Britain, France, Italy and Brasil, where over half of the organisations questioned admitted to not backing up virtual servers as frequently.
- Almost half of respondents back up virtual machines only weekly or monthly.
- Barely a third take backups of virtual machines each day.

### Implications for backup and disaster recovery

Following an initial rush to consolidation, companies are looking to take advantage of the less obvious benefits of virtualisation to deliver enhanced flexibility and greater business agility. Features such as being able to bring virtual machines online in minutes rather than days, dynamically allocate resources to match business needs and migrate workloads without downtime, to keep critical production systems running at full capacity all the time.

Against that backdrop of a dynamic and constantly changing virtual machine infrastructure, an infrequent backup regime makes no sense at all. Backups need to be taken daily at least, if not continuously on mission critical product systems, plus there's an equal need to be able to recover from outages using those backups in as little time as possible.

### How Acronis can help

Thanks to its award-winning imaging and bare-metal restore technology, Acronis products like Acronis vmProtect 7 provide the fastest way to backup virtual machines, always-incremental, with nearly zero impact on host servers. With Acronis Instant restore you can also instantly boot a VM and recover it in seconds.

## Key Global Finding:

### Offsite backup strategy still lacking

Although an essential weapon in the backup and disaster protection armoury, local backups cannot protect data from the consequences of a natural or man-made disaster. Despite these risks, however, almost a quarter of all businesses still don't have an offsite backup strategy in place, a near identical finding to the previous year indicating that attitudes towards offsite backup have not changed.

### Implications for backup and disaster recovery

Traditional methods of providing for off-site storage of backups tend to be labour-intensive, complex and costly. Moreover, because disasters are by their very nature rare, companies tend not to practice recovery procedures only to discover, too late, they don't work or that the backup data they need is either not usable or simply not there.

Use of the cloud to provide for offline storage of backups would appear to address these and other issues. Indeed respondents to the Acronis survey identified three additional benefits including lower IT operating costs, easy access to additional and flexible storage space and improved compliance.

There are, however, still some serious concerns regarding the use of cloud as part of backup and disaster recovery operations that need to be addressed, respondents listing security and complexity among the top issues.

## How Acronis can help

Acronis Backup & Recovery Online leverages the company's patented disk imaging technology to enable customers to take backups to the Cloud rather than local disk or tape, giving small to medium-sized enterprises the equivalent of a dedicated remote data centre, but at a much more affordable price.

For additional information about the Acronis DR Index 2012, please visit <http://acronisinfo.com>.



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